

A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



In this July/August issue of SPAN, we mark the 231st anniversary of American independence on July 4 and the 60th anniversary of India's independence on August 15. U.S.-India diplomatic relations date from the

18th century, when George Washington, America's first President, sent an envoy to India, but contemporary Americans are proud that the United States was the first country to initiate diplomatic relations with India in August 1947.

SPAN is pleased to present articles written especially for our readers by veteran Indian diplomat K. Shankar Bajpai and American historian Stanley Wolpert that explain, reminisce, and comment on relations between our countries over the past six decades. These, and other articles in our special segment on U.S.-India relations, review the natural affinity of two peoples who fought to win their independence from the same colonial power, and who built successful democracies, yet nevertheless experienced difficulties during the past 60 years over differing world views. The articles contributed by these distinguished writers reflect sentiments that public opinion polls in India and America clearly show—there is a deep and broad consensus that our two great democracies have embarked upon a new era of cooperation based on shared values and interests. We see evidence of this not only in the similar language in our nations' founding documents and our governments' foreign policies, but also in the broadening commercial and people-to-people relations between our countries.

An article by SPAN Editor Laurinda Keys Long on exciting possibilities for growth and cooperation in aviation and an essay by Manuka Khanna on the challenges ahead in finding common ground on the issue of intellectual property rights provide examples of contemporary engagements between India and the United States. In his review of the interesting new history on political activism by Indian Americans, Francis C. Assisi underscores the extraordinary contributions of individual Indians and Americans—unique personalities from a flamboyant businessman to a principled President—who made important contributions to our cultural, social and diplomatic relations. In the last segment of his series on traveling by bus across the United States, the Indian writer-photographer and intrepid traveler Sebastian John contemplates our two nations and makes the case that individual, personal connections between Indians and Americans will continue to grow.

Happy Independence Day!

Gary A. Schwartz